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ABSTRACT

Patterns of advancement of women administrators were studied with a sample of 188 administrators of home economics departments. The respondents ranged in age from the late twenties to the mid-sixties. A specially-developed instrument was administered to the sample--Women in Higher Education: Characteristics and Employment Strategies. About 75 percent of the administrators held a doctorate, and about 24 percent held a master's degree. Sixty-two percent were either the chair or department head; another 17.4 percent were dean or associate/assistant dean. Over 92 percent devoted time to teaching and research as well as administrative duties. It was found that the women administrators had a high satisfaction with their academic preparation, supportive relationships, career aspirations goals, and coping skills. Negative correlations indicate that the higher their satisfaction with those variables, the lower their dissatisfaction with frustrations in their professional career. Information is provided on: factors that were helpful in obtaining their present positions, persons who were supportive of the respondents, goal aspirations, coping skills, career paths, and the relationship between income and motivation level. A ranking of strategies employed by respondents is included. (Author/SW)

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ADVANCEMENT FACTORS OF WOMEN IN ADMINISTRATION:
PATTERNS AND PERSPECTIVES

by

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Questionnaires, relevant data, and complete bibliography
are available by contacting the researcher

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ABSTRACT

Two questions are addressed in this paper: 1) what are the characteristics of the women administrators in this study; and 2) what is their level of satisfaction with the strategies utilized by them in their advancement. The instrument, Women in Higher Education: Characteristics and Employment Strategies was applied to a specifically selected population. Sampling the entire population, the response rate was 84.4 percent. The sixty strategies, measured by the certainty technique clustered into dimensions of academic preparation, supportive relationships, goals for career aspirations, coping skills; and frustrations of employment. An examination of the means and the standard deviations revealed that satisfactions of the respondents were high for most of the strategies.

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The 1980s will be a challenging time for the female wanting to advance in higher education administration. A critical time for higher education, it is even more critical for women aspiring to administrative positions. Although women have made gains, the rhetoric cannot be substantiated by data that show significant increases. Research studies indicate that less than five percent of all college and university presidents and only sixteen percent of all academic administrators (e.g., deans and chairmen) are women (Fisher-Thompson and Hall, 1981). Women administrators are confined to a narrow range of positions and institutions, with forty-six percent of the higher education institutions, headed by women, were religious institutions, and thirty-five percent were women's institutions. With more than fifty-one percent of the student population in higher education institutions being female, women faculty and administrators are not comparably proportionate.

Even the policies set by affirmative action for search committees have not helped place women in higher level administration as most administrative positions are filled by men. The competitive struggle to move up the academic ladder to administrative positions for the female poses additional difficulties because of not only academic but cultural constraints.

How are the women aspiring to and working to assume administrative positions preparing themselves with administrative qualifications? How do women--without a mentor, without a network, without visibility--expedite the process of career advancement? The extreme number of challenges facing women seeking administrative

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positions clearly indicate that there is not an equal opportunity for women to be recognized as competent, qualified administrators. To overcome obstacles facing their advancement, women must actively seek and map out strategies and assume the risk that will place them in recognizable, credible leadership positions.

Important factors in the success of women advancing to higher education administrative positions are the patterns and perspectives established by women as they secure, maintain and advance to those positions. This paper presents the research conducted on a specifically selected population of well-qualified women in higher education that have obtained the top administrative position for their unit. Two questions were addressed in the paper: first, what are the characteristics of women who are now in higher education administration, and second, what individual factors have been utilized in their advancement.

Methodology

Instrument development. A search of the literature relevant to advancement of women in higher education administration provided a plethora of studies with data collected through interviews from small samples. To postulate valid strategies for generalizing to female novices aspiring to administration, findings must be collected from a large population. Since there was no instrument of this form available, Women in Higher Education: Characteristics and Employment Strategies (WCES) was developed. Two major questions addressed in the development included: (1) the measuring technique; and (2) the development of the scale. The conceptualized instrument was applied to three discrete test samples. Statistical analysis of correlation, multiple regression, and factor analysis on the collected data, examination of the instrument for content and construct validity by a panel, and input from field test respondents were the refinement processes that were

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applied following each application (Slimmer, 1983). Factor analysis provided a statistical method for applying the calculations of the scale to identify underlying communalities.

To improve the reliability of the instrument, the measurement method for the strategy scale was changed from a Thurstone-type to the certainty method. Warren, et al, (1969), and Mercier (1980) furnished evidence of the application and usefulness of the certainty method. This method incorporates a given response framework, as well as, assignment of numbers to the determinant. The move to the certainty measurement method produced a .92 reliability coefficient. The finalized WCES included sixty strategy items using the certainty method of measurement. The strategy items clustered into the following theoretical dimensions: Supportive Relationships (mentors, role models, network(s); Academic Preparation (degree(s), skills, competencies); Goals for Career Aspirations (clarity of goals, career map, productivity); Coping Skills (ability to relax, alleviating stress, self-concept); and Frustrations of Employment (role conflict, harassment, barriers). The instrument contained forty forced response items relating to academic, career, and personal information.

Data sources. Subjects for the study were a specifically selected population defined and identified as administrators of home economics units. These units were defined as colleges, departments, schools, and divisions of home economics in 118 public and 67 private institutions. Sampling the entire population of 232 administrators, the WCES was applied by mail with three follow-up procedures. One hundred ninety-seven questionnaires were returned, applying Herr's (1982) validity assessment system. one hundred eighty-eight questionnaires met the criteria of usability, giving a response rate of 84.4%. Six percent (n=12) of the nonrespondents were contacted by phone to determine differences

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occurring between respondents and nonrespondents. Nine indicated limited time and higher priorities than for answering questionnaires, while three indicated negligence.

Discussion and Findings

The respondents ranging in age from the late 20s to over 65, indicated the age group between 46 to 55 containing more respondents (33.0%) than any other. Regarding marital status, 59 (31.9%) were single, 93 (50.3%) were married, 15 (8.1%) were widowed, and 18 (9.2%) were divorced or separated. Fifty-one of the respondents indicated responsibility for children under 18 years old. Only five indicated a degree other than a doctorate or masters while 139 (75.1%) hold a doctorate, 44 (23.8%) a master's degree.

Sixty-two percent indicated they were either the chair or the head of a department; another 17.4 percent indicated their position as dean, associate or assistant dean. Only fourteen (7.4%) indicated that all of their time was spent in administrative duties. Over ninety-two percent of the respondents devoted time to teaching and research as well as administrative duties. Gross modal income from only their employment for 39 (21.2%) was from twenty to twenty-five thousand dollars. But 17.9 percent indicated the gross income from only their employment was from forty to forty-nine thousand dollars. Seventy-eight (41.5%) have been employed in higher education from eleven to twenty years.

Relying to the question: what was the single most helpful source responsible for you locating the position you currently hold? Forty-one (23.4%) indicated that direct personal application was the most important with personal friends being the second most important source. The following three items were ranked as the most important in obtaining their present position: work experience (24.5%); academic background (25.0%); and personal recommendations (18.5%). But when asked

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written communication; mastered math skills needed for administrative employment; and learned to evaluate objectively.

The strategies with the highest satisfaction in the supportive relationship dimension indicated the most satisfaction for spouse/mate's attitude influenced decisions regarding my employment; and if married, have a cooperative spouse. Low means for supportive relationships were found for: father was (or is) a role model for employment; major professor(s) for master's or doctoral level was (or is) a mentor for my professional career; mother was (or is) a role model for employment; and publicize the admirable traits of women administrators in my area. These ratings indicate that the women do tend to have supportive relationships from their spouses, but parents were not role models, and respondents provide low support to other professional women in their area.

Comparing means in the dimension for goal aspirations indicated that the respondents were aware of their ambitions and potential, saw themselves as being professionally competitive with males and other females and had a high level of energy. Low means were found for the strategies of: mapped-out my professional environment to determine who and where are the significant people; and have a clearly defined and written job description. Another low satisfaction was noted in professional productivity of research, grants, and publications.

Low means for frustrations for women as they secured and maintained employment in higher education administration provides substantiating evidence for the coping skills cluster. High satisfaction was indicated for these items: assertive, when necessary; believe in myself; my physical health; and have a sense of humor. Low means were found for the following strategies: developed a new hobby or interest within the past three years; have an effective way of

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which axiom; who you are, what you know, whom you know was the most important, 43.2% indicated that what you know was the most important for obtaining their present position. One hundred thirty-one (71.2%) indicated they obtained their present position by "being in the right place at the right time" with 74.4% indicating they had more than half of the influence of placing themselves in the right place.

The respondents indicating they had a mentor were 57.6% with 20.2% of that number indicating they had both male and female mentors. Fifty percent indicated a role model with 68.5% of that number stating the role model was female. Almost 60 percent indicated they were not members of a network.

Seventy (38.5%) of the respondents started their career in higher education immediately following graduation from college. Of the respondents, 85 (45.2%) indicated there were "stop-outs" in their career path for more than one year. Reasons were given as marriage, birth of children, and change of location for husband's career. Further study is recommended to determine the difference among respondents of continuous work pattern, those with stop-outs, and those starting a career later in life. Over ninety-five percent (n=173) indicated that the personal role would "take the back seat" when time constraints forced establishing priorities between personal, family, and professional life.

An examination of the means and standard deviations of the items revealed that the satisfaction of the women was high for most of the strategies. From the academic dimension, over 85 percent of the respondents indicated they were well-qualified for administrative positions with over 94 percent indicating capability of assuming leadership. Items with highest means were: well-qualified for administrative positions; and satisfaction with my academic preparation. Strategies that rated low were: training in employment strategies; oral and

dealing with frustrations; and provide time for relaxation.

An interesting pattern was shown from the study on the relationship of income and the level of motivation. Although more respondents indicated self-actualization ($n=59$; 31.4%) than indicated economics as the motivation for beginning their career, the income variable evidenced more positive and higher correlations than did any other variable, indicating the higher the income, the greater was the respondent's perception of satisfaction with her coping skills, academic preparation, and supportive relationships (and vice versa). High negative correlations were indicated between income and frustration strategies. Of these respondents, 56 (29.8%) indicated that they had always expected to work. This item shows a different reason for motivation than for respondents from a population of nonadministrative women (Slimmer, 1982).

Pearson product moment correlation coefficients and multiple regression (stepwise and hierarchical) were the statistical techniques used to assess the extent of interrelatedness between the variables of the respondents' characteristics (personal and career) and the variables of strategies used for advancement. Regression analysis included: computation of interactions between characteristics and the dimensions of the scale with a step-wise procedure used to determine the contribution of each variable to explained variance in the regression equation. Using multiple regression as a descriptive method, it neither implied or assumed cause or effect. A probability of 0.05 was used in the statistical analysis.

A multivariate analysis of the variables of characteristics, position held, income, attitudes and strategies gave evidence there were some relationships. Only when the income variable was added to the regression equation, the null hypothesis was rejected. Differences in respondents' background and values, level of position, levels of self-perception, and definition of terms used in

the instrument could have contributed to the lack of additional statistically significant findings.

Summary

Findings from this study indicated that women in higher education had a high satisfaction with their academic preparation, supportive relationships, goals for career aspirations, and coping skills. Negative correlations indicated that the higher their satisfaction with those variables the lower their dissatisfaction with frustrations in their professional career. The relatively few statistical significant regressions indicates that with this study, I have failed to verify that relationships do exist between and among all the variables. Based on the analysis of data from personal and career items, the implications are to apply the instrument to a sample from a larger population for further testing. Because these findings were from a specifically selected population, generalizations from the data to other populations should be made cautiously. Verification from the data parallels findings from three other studies, using the same instrument, conducted on other populations.

Educational importance of study. Evidence from successful women in higher education administration will help eradicate the mind set of the negative self-concepts produced by acculturation. Advancement patterns used by these highly successful women, of when and how, to successfully prepare for administrative positions, could provide the key for career advancement. The study identifies productive strategies regarding academic preparation, supportive relationships, career aspirations, coping skills, and what are the frustrations of employment in higher education administration. The generalization of the results of this study will be helpful to other women aspiring to administrative roles, therefore, utilization of these skills used for advancement to administration seems viable.

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RANKING OF STRATEGIES WITH HIGHEST MEANS

<u>RANK</u>	<u>STRATEGY</u>	<u>MEAN</u>
1.	81. if married, have a cooperative spouse/mate	10.619
2.	99. ability of mentor	10.163
3.	58. believe in myself	10.130
4.	48. spouse/mate's attitude influenced decisions regarding my employment	10.116
5.	62. success of my career	10.093
6.	54. consider my academic gradepoint	10.091
7.	51. well-qualified for administrative positions	9.833
8.	47. spouse/mate's career influenced decisions regarding my employment	9.791
9.	44. capable of assuming leadership	9.607
10.	97. prestige of the institution(s) granting my advanced degree(s)	9.593
11.	46. see myself as being professionally competitive with females	9.554
12.	55. encourage other women to get into administration	9.469
13.	70. have a sense of humor	9.412
14.	100. my academic preparation	9.412
15.	41. aware of my ambitions	9.404
16.	56. publicize the admirable traits of women administrators in my area	9.399
17.	50. parents or other relatives (children) needs, influenced my decisions regarding employment	9.385
18.	43. feel my potential and ambition are congruent	9.374
19.	77. my physical health	9.328
20.	64. consider myself to have professional needs	9.326

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<u>RANK</u>	<u>STRAGETY</u>	<u>MEAN</u>
21.	42. aware of my potential	9.322
22.	87. have a professional supportive relationship(s)	9.282
23.	59. a mentor for another female	9.258
24.	75. my professional service (e. g. offices held; served on committees; editorial boards)	9.243
25.	98. present position	9.177
26.	96. my self-image	9.148
27.	76. my level of energy	9.131
28.	57. assertive, when necessary	9.108
29.	86. major professor(s) for doctoral level was (or is) a mentor for my professional career	9.062
30.	83. recognition of accomplishments	9.051
31.	45. see myself as being professionally competitive with males	9.093
32.	53. experiences of applying for employment	9.011
33.	79. oral and written communication	8.984
34.	67. consider myself up-to-date and well-informed about pertinent issues	8.934
35.	52. set a goal of securing an administrative position	8.914
36.	82. pursue opportunities in which to demonstrate my competencies	8.845
37.	65. engage in a willingness to take risks	8.767
38.	63. mother was (or is) a role model for employment	8.737
39.	88. my training in organizational skills	8.728
40.	60. a mentor for a male	8.649
41.	94. learned to evaluate objectively	8.617
42.	74. mastered math skills needed for administrative employment	8.601

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<u>RANK</u>	<u>STRATEGY</u>	<u>MEAN</u>
43.	69. store details in my head	8.362
44.	66. consider myself feminine	8.331
45.	90. have an effective way of dealing with frustrations	8.318
46.	71. formed a coalition where I am employed	8.304
47.	95. consider myself dynamic	8.296
48.	89. have a conflict between my professional and family roles	8.267
49.	73. father was (or is) a role model for employment	8.223
50.	61. major professor(s) for master's level was (or is) a mentor for my professional career	8.158
51.	91. developed a new hobby or interest within the past three years	8.061
52.	85. have been a victim of discrimination in employment	8.036
53.	68. consider myself a serious scholar	7.983
54.	78. my training (or courses) in employment strategies	7.876
55.	92. mapped-out my professional environment to determine who and where are the significant people	7.810
56.	93. have a clearly defined and written job description	7.149
57.	84. 'cry' victimized when I have been discriminated against	7.070
58.	72. have a negative attitude toward men in the hierarchies	7.000
59.	80. provide time for relaxation	6.669
60.	49. professional productivity (publications; papers presented, grants)	6.481